

Figure 2: Hardin City-County Planning Area (separate from this growth policy)

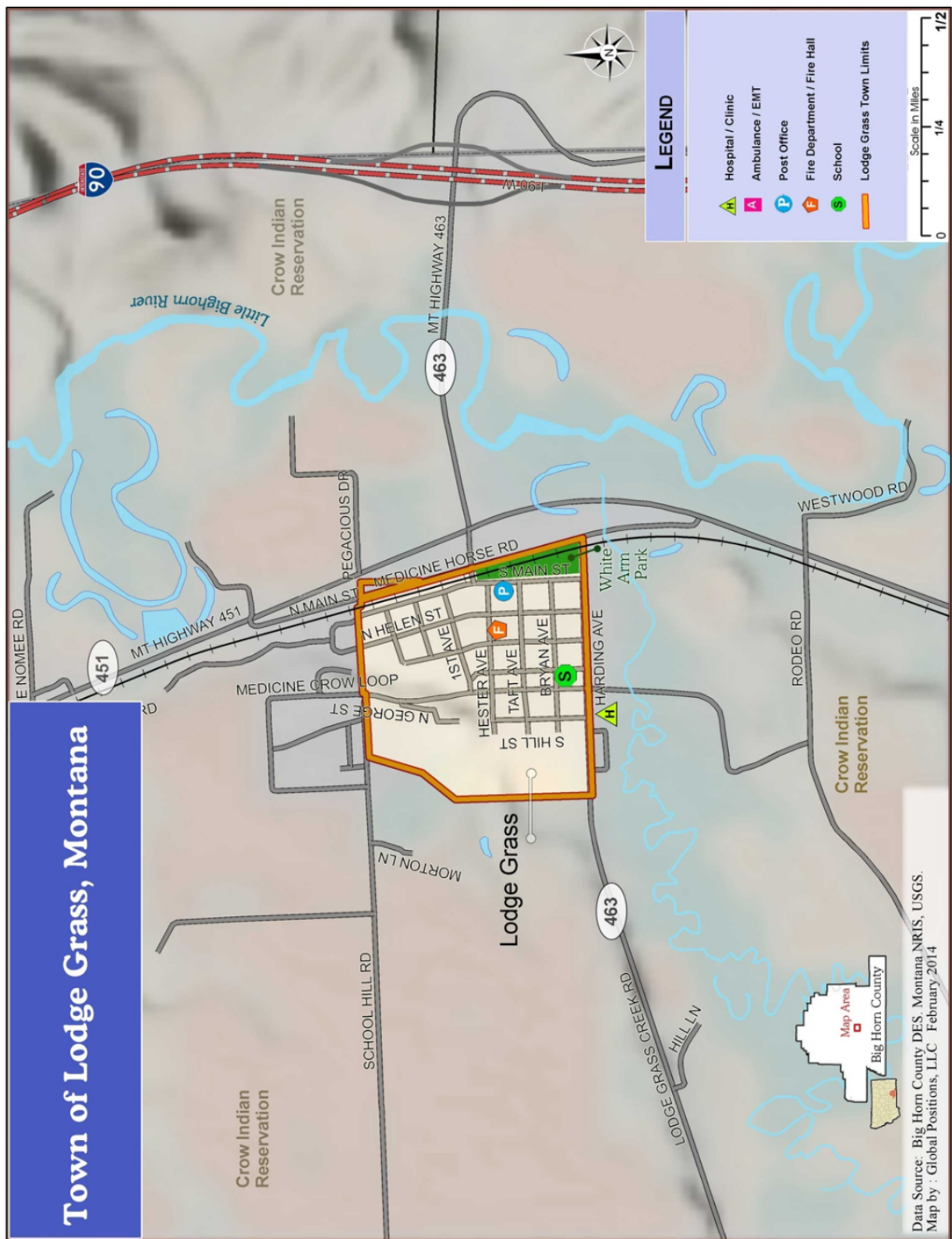


Figure 3: Town of Lodge Grass (separate from this growth policy)

Big Horn County and city of Hardin established the city-county planning area surrounding Hardin in 1969. A Growth Management Plan for the area was adopted in 2009.

Lodge Grass does not currently have a growth policy. Neither the Crow nor Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations have a current comprehensive plan.

## **1.5 PLANNING PROCESS**

As authorized by 76-1-106, MCA, the planning board prepared a draft growth policy in response to direction from the Big Horn County Commissioners.

The county hired Cossitt Consulting, Inc. to provide technical assistance to the planning board in updating the growth policy. The consultant met with the planning board and provided draft documents for review. The planning board issued the draft for public review on January 2, 2014 and set a deadline of February 19, 2014 for comments.

A public hearing was held by the planning board on February 19, 2014. Notice of the hearing was published in the Big Horn County News on January 23<sup>rd</sup> (within the minimum 10-day advance notice required by 76-1-602, MCA) and posted again on February 13. Comments were received from Laurie Tschetter of Hardin and from Allison Mouch, Bureau Chief of the Montana Community Technical Assistance Program. The planning board considered the comments before finalizing their recommendation as a resolution, which was forwarded to the Big Horn County Commissioners. The Big Horn County Commissioners adopted the growth policy on May 1, 2014.

## **1.6 HOW THIS PLAN IS ORGANIZED**

This growth policy is organized in five separate chapters as follows:

- 1. Purpose and Scope**

This section identifies the geographic scope of the growth policy and its basic purpose. It also identifies the process used in developing this plan.

- 2. Historical Background and Setting**

This chapter provides a brief overview of the county and a brief summary of its history.

- 3. Trends and Issues**

Changes that have occurred since 2002, when the last growth policy was adopted, are discussed in this chapter. It also includes a section on projected trends for the future. The information in this chapter summarizes much of the detail in Chapter 5. It also sets the framework for the goals and objectives.

**4. Goals, Objectives and Implementation**

This chapter includes the goals, objectives and implementation strategies of the plan. It includes other sections on review, revision and amendments to the growth policy. It also includes sections on subdivision and the wildland urban interface, as required by state law.

**5. Inventory of Existing Characteristics**

This chapter provides detailed information on land use, population, housing, economics, local services, infrastructure, and natural resources in Big Horn County.



## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Big Horn County is the sixth largest county in Montana. It was originally formed February 2, 1865 as one of the original nine counties of Montana Territory. It included the majority of eastern Montana, from the Canadian border above, to Wyoming below. On January 15, 1869 the northern portion of the county was split to create Dawson County. On February 16, 1877 the county boundaries changed again and received a new identity -- Custer County. In January 1913, Big Horn County as it is known today was created from portions of Yellowstone and Rosebud Counties.

Big Horn County is Montana's fourteenth most populous county with 12,865 residents according to the 2010 decennial census. Hardin, the county seat, is the state's 22nd largest city with a population of 3,505 in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Other cities and towns in Big Horn County include Busby, Crow Agency, Fort Smith, Garryowen, Lodge Grass, Pryor, St. Xavier, and Wyola. The majority of Big Horn County lies within the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations.

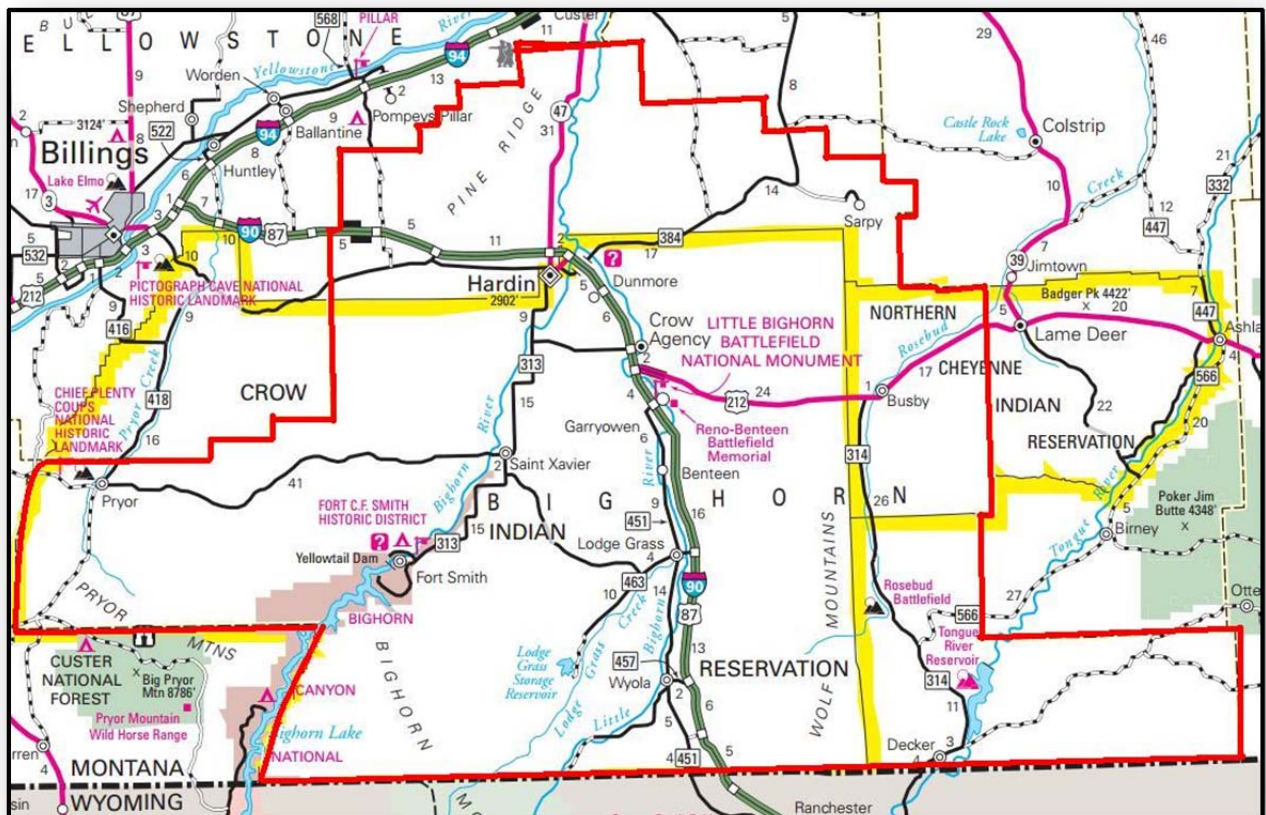


Figure 4: Highway Map of Big Horn County